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SUBJECT: DISGRUNTLED MILITARY OFFICERS TO JOIN FAR EAST PROTESTS

¶1. Summary. A new group has thrown its hat into the ring of Far East protests and will join Communists in organizing a demonstration this weekend. The Vladivostok Officers Union will be latest group in the growing number voices upset with recent Kremlin policies. This coming weekend will be a busy one for law enforcement agencies in Primorye with demonstrations scheduled for both April 11 and 12. Yedinaya Rossiya has announced plans to join the fray as a counterpoint and show its support for government policies.

#### New Protest Organizers

¶2. The Vladivostok Officers Union announced that it will organize a joint protest with the local Communist Party on April 11 at 1100 in downtown Vladivostok to express anger over insufficient pensions for retired military officers and proposed military cutbacks in the region. Organizers said they expect several thousand participants to attend the action to be called "The Nation and the Army are United." The TIGR group, which has been involved in several past demonstrations, has expressed support for the planned demonstration.

¶3. The officers' discontent is twofold. Group spokesman Dmitriy Tyulenev stated that pension increases for retired military personnel are insufficient and have fallen behind those for civilians. He pointed out that the four civilian pension increases during 2009 will total 150 percent, though the military received only one increase of 108 percent. The highest pension is 13,000 Rubles for former Admirals and Generals. Currently 21,400 retired military personnel live in Primorye, home of Vladivostok's Pacific Fleet.

¶4. The second concern for the group is the proposed cutback in military personnel, which will dismiss between 6,000 and 8,000 Primorye military members from several units including 3,000 from the Pacific fleet and 800 from the Primorye-based Fifth Army. Medical personnel are facing a 20 percent staff cut. Most will not receive lodging or a military pension since their length of service does not meet the 20 year requirement. The average age of those scheduled for downsizing is 37. The officers' group is also calling for guaranteed housing for the longer-serving members who will be dismissed, and tuition-free access to career re-training centers typically available only to 20-year retirees.

#### Further Demonstrations the Following Day

¶5. The military officers' demonstration on Saturday will be followed the next day by a demonstration protesting economic conditions. The organizer of that demonstration, Anstasiya Zagoruyko, who was one of the main coordinators of the December 14th protests that blocked several major thoroughfares in Vladivostok, stated that participants will draw attention to high customs tariffs, worsening economic conditions, and a draft law initiated by Yedinaya Rossiya regarding new technical standards for all imported cars. Zagoruyko also stated to the

media that similar protests will be held in St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, and several Far East cities. The Molodaya Gvardia youth wing of Yedinaya Rossiya has announced plans for demonstrations in support of government policies at the same time and place as the Vladivostok protests are scheduled.

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